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CONTACT: Sen. Gilda Jacobs (D-Huntington Woods)
517/373-7888
Sen. Deb Cherry (D-Burton)
517/373-1636

SENATE DEMOCRATS PUSH FOR CONSUMER RIGHTS IN CELL PHONE SERVICE Cell Phone Bill Of Rights Would Force Reform; Improve Service

LANSING - Senate Democrats today introduced legislation to give consumers increased protection in their dealings with cell phone providers. The comprehensive package calls for quality of service standards, requires companies to provide accurate coverage maps, and increases oversight of marketing and billing practices.

"In this age where most adults and half of the teenagers have cell phones, the term wireless should not mean powerless," said Sen. Gilda Z. Jacobs (D-Huntington Woods). "This legislation simply provides consumers the leverage to demand fairness in plans and service."

The legislation also requires clear identification of package minute usage; good faith estimates of monthly service; and legible and unambiguous contract language. In addition, customers would have a 20-day grace period to cancel contracts and would receive full refunds. The maximum a wireless provider could charge for early contract termination is \$20. Providers would also be required to notify subscribers 30 days prior to contract expiration.

"It can be especially difficult for seniors to keep up with the frequent advances in technology, and even more difficult for them to keep track of the changing rules of wireless contracts," said Sen. Deb Cherry (D-Burton). "The Cell Phone Bill of Rights would protect every single cell phone user in Michigan and help put consumers on a level playing field with providers."

As of June, 2005, wireless subscribers in Michigan increased to 6.24 million from 5.43 million from the previous year.

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